

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*H.R. 4030, the Congressional Medal for Outstanding Contributions in Math and Science
Education Act of 2004*

March 30, 2004

Statement of Representative Nick Smith

I'd like to welcome all of you here today for this Research Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 4030, the Congressional Medal for Outstanding Contributions in Math and Science Education Act of 2004, which Ranking Member Johnson and I introduced last week.

Last year, during the consideration of legislation to authorize the Math and Science Partnership Program, I asked our witnesses to consider the following question: if education is more the lighting of a fire than filling a container with facts, when is that fire lit for math and science and how do we keep it kindled?

They all had different answers. Some said third grade. Others said kindergarten. Yet they all agreed that our greatest failure – and our greatest challenge – was that too many children failed to experience the spark at all. As a result, too few received the math and science education they deserved.

We need to do a better job of encouraging and training students in science and math so that they and the United States can be successful in the highly competitive job market that is emerging. The way to maintain and increase our standard of living is through innovation, technological advancement and hard work. Unfortunately, our schools aren't producing enough young people with the math and science skills necessary to meet demand.

Results from the most recent Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) – as well as evidence all around us -- demonstrate in stark terms the need to improve math and science achievement for all students. While U.S. students are nearly first in the world in

science and above the international average in mathematics in grade four, this predominance is short-lived. In fact, the longer U.S. students are in school, the farther they fall. By 12th grade, U.S. students rank among the lowest of all participating countries and ahead of only Cyprus and South Africa.

In response to this data, President Bush proposed the Math and Science Partnership Program as part of his comprehensive education reform initiative. This program was created to support partnerships between colleges and universities and elementary and secondary schools but it also sought to challenge long held practices and to support innovative projects in math and science.

However, universities and colleges aren't the only organizations that partner with schools to improve K-12 math and science education. As we will hear from our witnesses, businesses and other private entities understand the importance of investing in math and science education today to produce a quality workforce in the future. Private entities work with schools to improve education in a variety of ways.

As I mentioned before the markup, H.R. 4030 creates a Congressional Medal for private entities for outstanding contributions to math and science education at K-12 schools. In addition to recognizing these efforts, the legislation requires the National Science Foundation to make information about award winners publicly available so that examples of techniques and strategies can be utilized around the country.

In a moment, I will introduce our witnesses, but now I will recognize Ranking Member Johnson for five minutes to make her opening statement.

We have an expert panel of witnesses here today who will not only provide comments on H.R. 4030, but also share with us their unique knowledge and experience with private efforts to improve science, technology, engineering, and math education in K-12 schools. Dr. Judith Ramaley is the Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources at the National Science Foundation. Prior to joining NSF in 2001, Dr. Ramaley was President

of the University of Vermont, and before that she was a professor of biology at Portland State University.

Mr. Jay Engeln is the Resident Practitioner for Business-School Partnerships at the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Mr. Engeln has nearly thirty years of experience in public education in various positions at Colorado high schools, including as principal of William J. Palmer High School in Colorado Springs, where he initiated partnerships with more than 100 businesses. Mr. Engeln also was a finalist for Colorado Teacher of the Year and a recipient of the prestigious Kappa Delta Pi Award for outstanding contributions to education programs.

I will now yield to Ranking Member Johnson to introduce our next witness.

Ms. Antoinette Bailey is the Vice President of Community and Education Relations at Boeing Company, where she is responsible for corporate charitable contributions, employee contributions, volunteerism, and external education funding and initiatives. Prior to the merger of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, Ms. Bailey served as Vice President of Community Relations of McDonnell Douglas and President of the McDonnell Douglas Foundation.

Our last witness is Mr. Gus Krudwig, co-founder of the Glou Factory in Jackson, Michigan. Established in 2000, the Glou Factory supports after-school, weekend, and summer enrichment programs for students in areas ranging from computer technology to woodworking. In addition to their work with the schools and on their own, Gus and Glou Factory co-founder Louis Cubille also partner with organizations like the Jackson Area Manufacturers Association, the Jackson County Mathematics and Science Center, Baker College, the Jackson County Career Center, Jackson Community College, Spring Arbor College, and others to improve math and science education in the Jackson area.

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for being here today and look forward to an interesting and productive discussion.